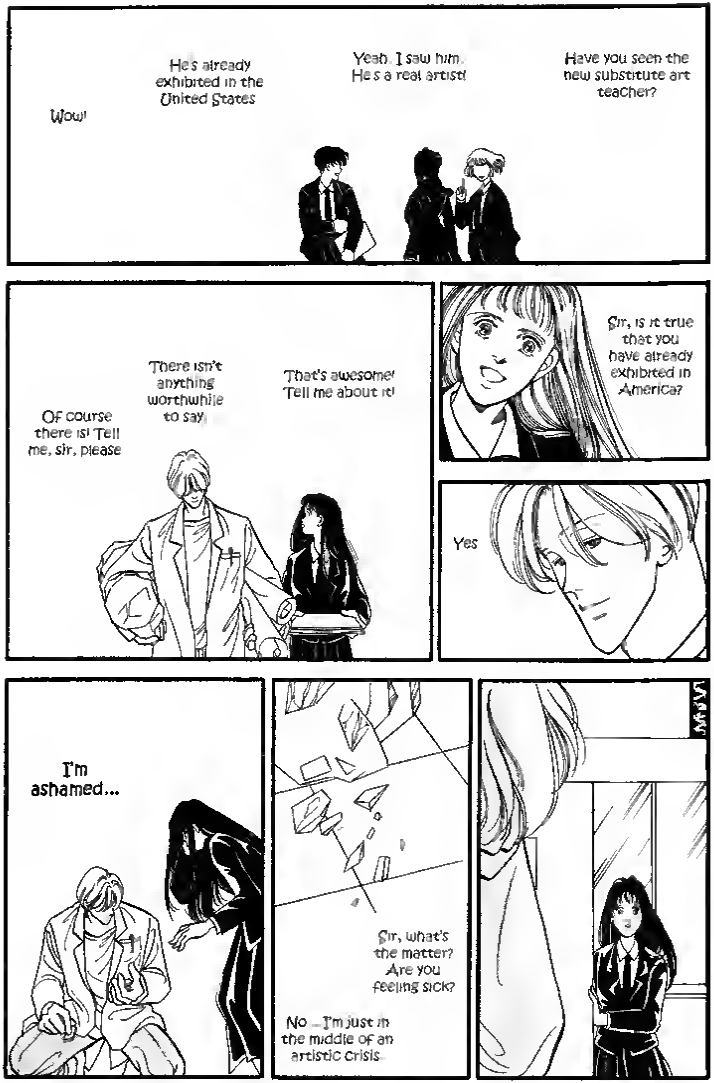
AMERICA

Chapter Two

I BEG YOUR PARDON?
YOU ARE...
GLANCE
OH, REALLY?
I MEAN... I SAW YOU ONCE, BY CHANCE...
NO...
YOU ARE FRIEND OF HERS? HAVE WE MET BEFORE?
MMM... ARE YOU MEETING MAE?
AH...
WE WEREN'T GOING TO MEET, BUT SHE TALKED ABOUT THIS PLACE A LOT
I WAS HOPING TO MEET HER HERE

YES
THEN WHY ARE YOU SEEING NAE?
WHAT THE...?
BANG
ARE YOU... MARRIED?
I WOULD PREFER TO AVOID COMPLICATING MY LIFE
IT MIGHT BE BETTER FOR ME TO LEAVE RIGHT AWAY. MAY I ASK YOU TO DO SOMETHING?
WHAT IS IT?
CAN YOU TELL NAE THAT...
...SINCE I'M GOING TO SET UP MY OWN EXHIBITION SOON...

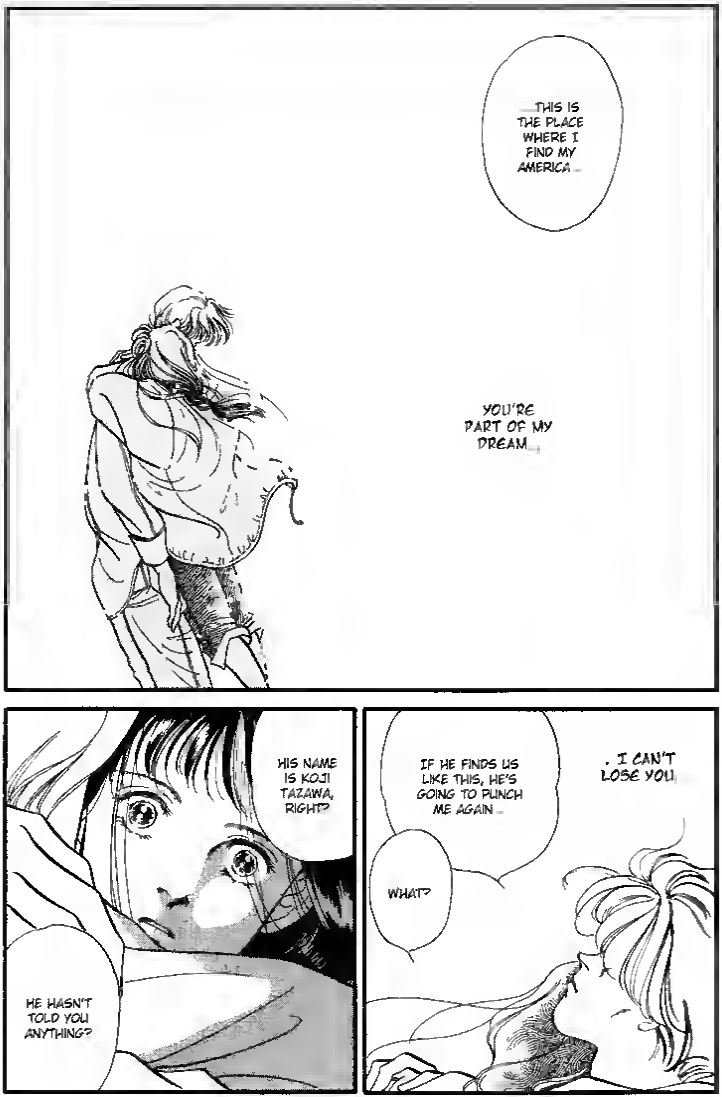
I CAN'T SEE THE CONNECTION...
...BETWEEN YOUR EXHIBITION AND NAE.
!
I WANT TO END OUR RELATION-SHIP
MY WIFE'S FATHER IS SPONSORING IT.
CRACK!!


Have you seen the new substitute art teacher?
Yeah. I saw him. He's a real artist!
He's already exhibited in the United States
Wow!
Sir, is it true that you have already exhibited in America?
That's awesome! Tell me about it!
There isn't anything worthwhile to say
Of course there is! Tell me, sir, please
Yes
I'm ashamed...
Sir, what's the matter? Are you feeling sick?
No — I'm just in the middle of an artistic crisis
SAW

KNOCK
KNOCK
NAE, A VISITOR FOR YOU!
sits up
I DIDN'T KNOW THEM THAT...
...YOU WERE MARRIED.
Don't worry I'm by your side
One day, we'll go to America together
You really are self-confident... you fear nothing!
MOMA

I CAME TO BRING MISS TOGAWA THE BOOK SHE ASKED FOR BEFORE THE HOLIDAYS
Johnny Deadline, reporter
SORRY FOR DROPPING BY WITHOUT NOTICE...
BUT SINCE I WAS NEARBY...
WELL THEN SEE YOU SOON
MISTER, WAIT...!
MOM, I'M GOING TO WALK HIM HOME!
BUT... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FACE?
OH, REALLY?
THIS IS THE ORIGINAL BOOK BY BOB GREEN THAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR.
MY WIFE FOUND IT BY CHANCE
WHAT'S GOING ON? WHY DID YOU COME TO MY HOUSE?
YOU'VE BEEN WEIRD LATELY IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL ME, DO IT!
WAIT!!!
BAAM
HE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A REAL TEACHER...

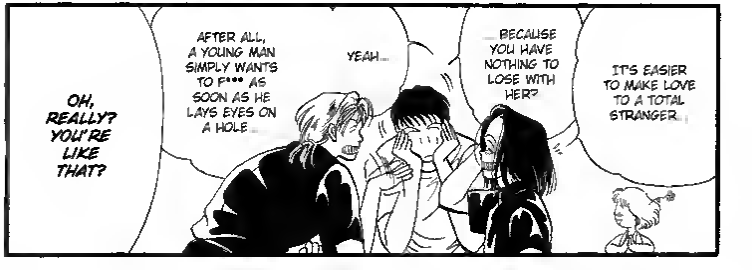
NAE...
IF YOU DON'T LIKE ME ANYMORE...
IF YOU'RE BORED WITH ME...
WHY...
DO YOU LOVE ME SO MUCH?
BECAUSE...

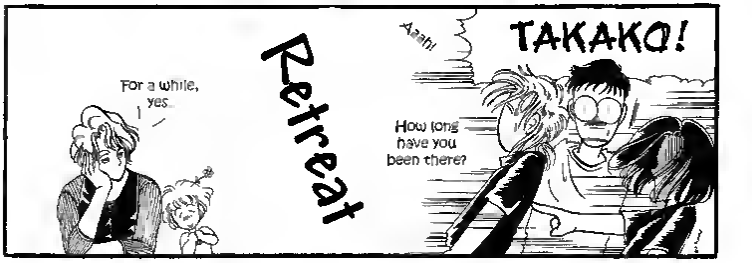

...THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE I FIND MY AMERICA...
YOU'RE PART OF MY DREAM...
HIS NAME IS KOJI TAZAWA, RIGHT?
HE HASN'T TOLD YOU ANYTHING?
IF HE FINDS US LIKE THIS, HE'S GOING TO PUNCH ME AGAIN...
WHAT?
...I CAN'T LOSE YOU.

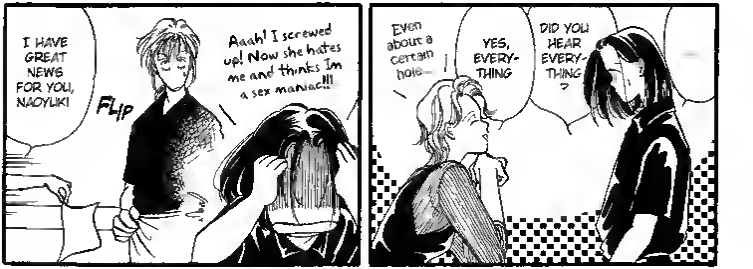
KOJI!! GET OVER HERE!
UGH...
OH! HI, NAE!
WHERE IS KOJI?!
BANG!!
Listen, Nae
HE HAS A BRUISE. YOU MUST HAVE HIT HIM HARD!
That is to say- I
The cocktail of the day is delicious
WHY'D YOU HIT HIM?!
Aren't you thirsty, Nae?
EXPLAIN YOURSELF!
YOU, SHUT UP, MARIKO!
I'M SORRY, BUT I HAVE TO TELL YOU SOMETHING...
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE AN AFFAIR WITH A MARRIED MAN
Hmm...
YOU MUST REALIZE THAT IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!
DO I MAKE MYSELF CLEAR?!

!
GULP
YOU HAVE TO MAKE IT VERY CLEAR TO HER
THAT THAT MAN IS GOING TO DUMP HER FOR HIS CAREER
BAM BAM
BAAAM
BAAM
I CAN'T TELL HER SOMETHING LIKE THAT... I'LL LOOK LIKE A SNITCH...
STOP PLAYING THE NICE GUY! OR YOU COULD ONLY DREAM OF MEETING YOUR ONE TRUE LOVE!
I DON'T WANT TO MEET ANYBODY...
I KNOW HOW HARD IT IS...
...TO BE IN LOVE WITH A FRIEND
I SAID I DON'T PLAN ON...
BUT OF COURSE, FOOL, IT'S OBVIOUS
YOU HAVE YOUR FUN WITH HER, BUT...
...ONE DAY, YOU REALIZE THAT'S NOT ENOUGH
IT'S NOT SO EASY

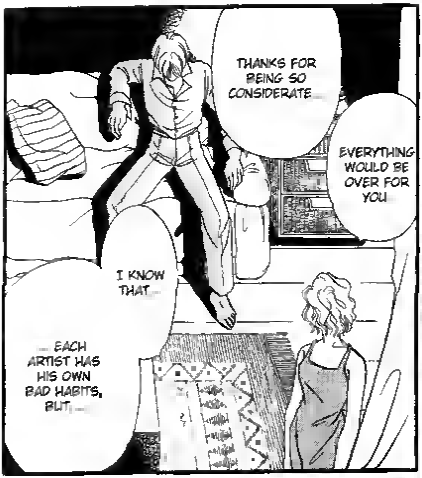
AAAAH!!!
EACH TIME YOU SEE HER YOU SUFFER NOT BEING ABLE TO SATIATE YOUR SEXUAL DESIRES
BECAUSE YOU WOULD WANT TO DO LOTS OF THINGS, BUT YOU CAN'T
WHY?
...YOUR RELATION-SHIP ENDS
IF YOU CONFESS YOUR LOVE TO HER AND SHE TELLS YOU IT'S BETTER TO REMAIN FRIENDS...

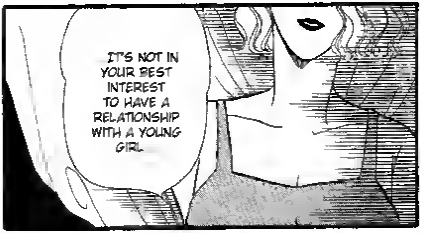

OH, REALLY? YOU'RE LIKE THAT?
AFTER ALL, A YOUNG MAN SIMPLY WANTS TO F*** AS SOON AS HE LAYS EYES ON A HOLE...
YEAH...
...BECAUSE YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE WITH HER?
IT'S EASIER TO MAKE LOVE TO A TOTAL STRANGER...

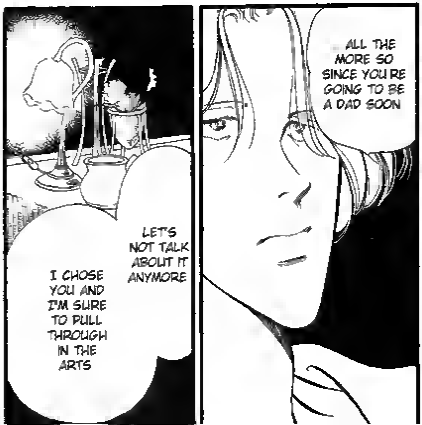

Retreat
For a while, yes...
How long have you been there?
Aaah!
TAKAKO!


I HAVE GREAT NEWS FOR YOU, NAOYUKI!
FLIP
Aaah! I screwed up! Now she hates me and thinks I'm a sex maniac!!!
Even about a certain hole...
YES, EVERY-THING
DID YOU HEAR EVERY-THING?

THE MANAGER OF A BAR I GO TO IS INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT.
AN AGENCY, WHICH PLACES MUSICIANS INTENDS TO FORM A "COMMERCIAL" GROUP
IT'S NOT VERY ARTISTIC, BUT IT'S A GOOD WAY TO ENTER THE MUSIC WORLD
HOW ABOUT TAKING PART IN A CASTING?
WHAT? FOR ME?
IT'S A DEAL!
HM?
ERR...
WHAT DO YOU SAY?
THANK YOU, TAKAKO!
UM...
ALL RIGHT! I'M TAKING CARE OF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION!
DON'T FORGET THE CASTING IS TAKING PLACE NEXT SATURDAY IN THE AFTERNOON
ARE YOU FINISHED?!
YOU SEE, YOU MUST BE AS SINCERE AS HE IS...
LOVE LOVE LOVE


THANKS FOR BEING SO CONSIDERATE...
EVERYTHING WOULD BE OVER FOR YOU
I KNOW THAT...
... EACH ARTIST HAS HIS OWN BAD HABITS, BUT...

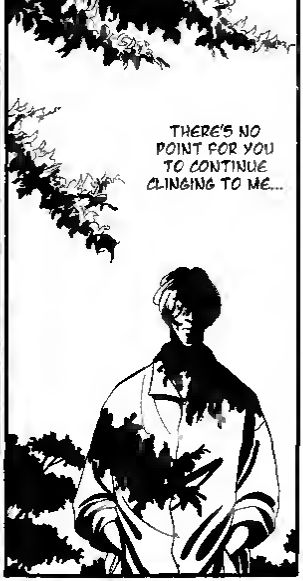

IT'S NOT IN YOUR BEST INTEREST TO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH A YOUNG GIRL

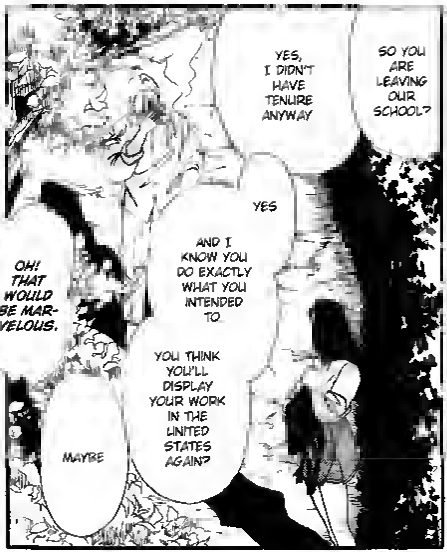

... ALL THE MORE SO SINCE YOU'RE GOING TO BE A DAD SOON
LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT IT ANYMORE
I CHOSE YOU AND I'M SURE TO PULL THROUGH IN THE ARTS

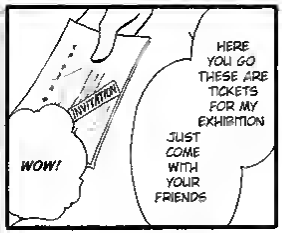
MY FATHER ISN'T AWARE OF IT
IF HE KNEW OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THAT GIRL HE WOULD STOP HELPING YOU.

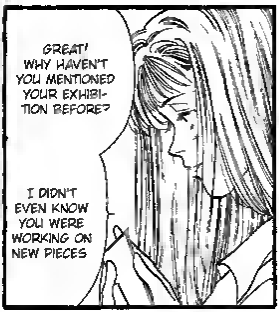
THERE ISN'T...
YOUR AMERICA...
YOUR DREAM ANYMORE...
WITHIN ME...
I, ON THE CONTRARY, SOMETIMES WANT TO BUGGER UP EVERYTHING...
OH, REALLY?
THAT'S THE WAY I LOVE YOU.

IT'S ONLY A MEMORY..


THERE'S NO POINT FOR YOU TO CONTINUE CLINGING TO ME...


SO YOU ARE LEAVING OUR SCHOOL?
YES, I DIDN'T HAVE TENURE ANYWAY
YES
AND I KNOW YOU DO EXACTLY WHAT YOU INTENDED TO
OH! THAT WOULD BE MARVELOUS.
YOU THINK YOU'LL DISPLAY YOUR WORK IN THE UNITED STATES AGAIN?
MAYBE


HERE YOU GO THESE ARE TICKETS FOR MY EXHIBITION
JUST COME WITH YOUR FRIENDS
INVITATION
WOW!


GREAT! WHY HAVEN'T YOU MENTIONED YOUR EXHIBITION BEFORE?
I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOU WERE WORKING ON NEW PIECES

YOU KNOW I CAN'T...
...TAKE YOU WITH ME
ALL RIGHT, GOOD LUCK!
I'M YOUR MOST LOYAL FAN!
...NAE, WHEN WILL YOU UNDER-STAND?
I'M BREAKING UP WITH YOU...

IT'S A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR ME
...YOU'RE A SMART GIRL...
FORTUNATELY
WELL... I KNOW VERY WELL THAT YOU'RE MARRIED
AND I HAVE NO INTENTION OF CHASING AFTER YOU IN AMERICA

WAIT... WHAT DO YOU MEAN TO SAY...?
YOU KNOW ONE NEEDS A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY IN ORDER TO ORGANIZE AN EXHIBITION?
NOT TO MENTION THE IMPORTANCE OF ACQUAINTANCES, OF CONNECTIONS.

MY MASTER IS THE ONE SPONSORING MY EXHIBITION, THAT IS TO SAY MY WIFE'S FATHER?
I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME...
I DON'T WANT HIM TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON BETWEEN US
Ba-thump
Ba-thump

SO...
Ba-thump

...OUR STORY ENDS HERE.
I couldn't talk openly to anyone about my love story.
It has always remained hidden, cutoff...
And then..
OUCH!!
Always in the background.

HA HA HA!
FEELINGS ARE JUST AS IMPORTANT, ALL RIGHT?
AAAAAAH!!!
YOU'VE BEEN SO TENSE LATELY...
MMH... NOTHING, I JUST BROKE A NAIL
WHAT'S THE MATTER, NAOYUKI?
DON'T WORRY
WATCH OUT, YOU SHOULDN'T PRACTICE TOO MUCH
YOU'RE SO DISTANT SINCE YOU LEFT SCHOOL!
...YOU HAVEN'T CONTACTED ANY OF US, YOUR OLD GROUP OF BUDDIES...
YOU? HERE?!
A GUY FROM ANOTHER CLASS TOLD US THAT WE COULD FIND YOU HERE
HEEEY! HOW'S IT GOING?
THERE ARE BUDDIES OF YOURS
YOUR BREAK'S OVER COME BACK TO WORK!
HEY, NAO-YUKI!!!!
ALL RIGHT!
WHAT?

THESE STUDENTS RARELY GO INTO BARS!
OUR SCHOOL IS A BIT ON THE BOURGEOIS SIDE AND...
YOUR BUDDIES HAVE DOG FOOD IN PLACE OF A BRAIN.
Don't worry. Stay calm.
I WOULD SAY IT IS VERY AMERICAN... AND VERY MANLY...
HMM... THIS BAR IS...
THE BARTENDER OVER THERE, IS HE A GAIJIN?
NICE AND SIMPLE.
OH REALLY?!
So you're a rich daddy's boy, too?
YOU MUST'VE PLAYED THE BLACK SHEEP AT YOUR SCHOOL?!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING NOW, NAOYUKI? HAVE YOU STARTED UP YOUR OWN GROUP?
NO, I'M PLAYING ALL ALONE
WHEN YOU SUDDENLY LEFT SCHOOL, WE WERE ALL SO SURPRISED
YOU KNOW THAT YOU'RE A LEGEND FOR THE UNDERCLASSMEN
HOW SO?
YEAH...
BUT, I'M GOING TO PARTICIPATE IN A CASTING.
WE'RE SURE YOU CAN MAKE IT!
YOU WERE THE BEST AMONG US!
OOOOH!!
SINCE YOU'RE A BOSS AND ALL...
YOU LEFT YOUR SCHOOL AND YOUR FAMILY, AND YOU HAVE BECOME A PROFESSIONAL MUSICIAN.
I'M NOT A PROFESSIONAL YET.

Phew! Once the entrance exam is over, I'll be able to finally devote myself to girls
Sorry, but I don't have the courage to risk my acceptance into college!
Oh, yeah this boy is soon going to be a student at the famous K private university! Incredible, isn't it?
Why don't you try it out, too?
We could go to the casting together!
Yes, but you were different from us
Don't exaggerate. We played together after all!
That's true...
Click
You're lucky because you're talented, Naoyuki!
But leading a life like that is no fun
Yes, he gets married for life
The one who's growing and selling potted vegetables?
On the other hand, Yokohama decided to work in his parents' shop
And that doesn't distract him too much from his studies?
Do you remember Takeshita, class 3? Well, he's engaged
Also they said...
♫
Everything will be all right tomorrow...
Heat on Rock
Eh he he...
...What?

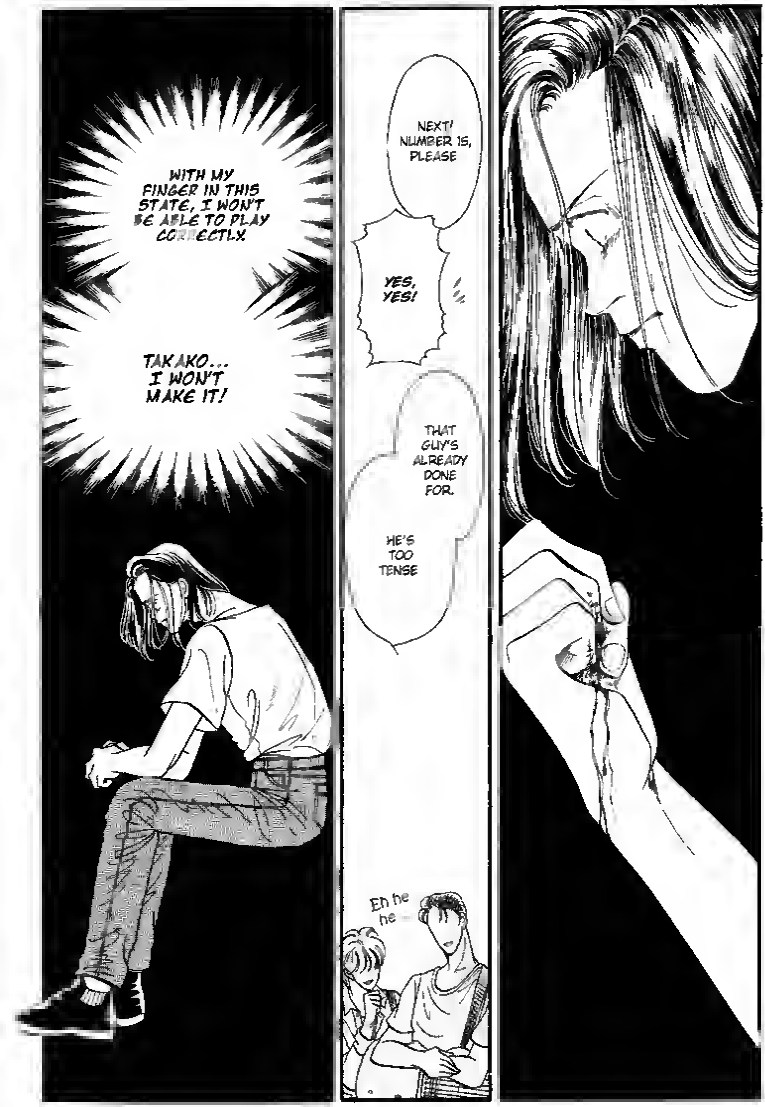
WHERE IS EVERY-BODY?!
TAKAKO! MARIKO! NAOYUKI!
TAKAKO AND NAOYUKI ARE TAKING PART IN A CASTING
WHAT?! NAOYUKI IS GOING TO BE A PRO?
WE DON'T KNOW YET.
THAT'S ENOUGH ALCOHOL. I DON'T WANT JEREMY TO NOTICE THAT I SERVED ALCOHOL TO A MINOR.
AH!
HI!
...
YOU KNEW ABOUT EVERYTHING?

DO I LOOK LIKE AN IDIOT NOW?
PAT
NOOOOOOO! WHAT A DISGRACE!
PAT
LIMM... YES.
YES...
I'M SORRY, I KNOW IT WAS NONE OF MY BUSINESS, BUT...
NO, NO! YOU DID WELL!
YOU DID WELL!
AND WHEN YOU KNEW IT, DID YOU HIT HIM?
WHERE DID YOU MEET?
...HERE
WHAP
NAE THERE'S NO NEED TO FORCE YOURSELF.

...
AH...
I'M SORRY...
SMILE
DON'T MAKE ME PICK UP GOOD HABITS.
YOU SHOULDN'T PAMPER ME
IT'S MY FAULT, I'M AN IDIOT.
HOWEVER...
EVEN IDIOTS SUFFER
FORGIVE ME
KOJI, PLEASE
HELP ME

WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER AFTER THE CASTING
YES
I'M REALLY PATHETIC
BEHAVING LIKE A MOTHER HEN...
UNEASY
GOOD MORNING!
BLAH BLAH
GULP!
!

WHAT?
I'VE NEVER DONE SUCH A THING!
ALL RIGHT, THEN PLAY THIS PART AND AFTERWARDS YOU WILL DO IT AGAIN WITH A BLUES SONG ARRANGEMENT
YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING FOR EIGHT YEARS
YES
NEXT! NUMBER 13 PLEASE!
IT'S BUSY!
OUCH!!!
GRAB
DO-THUMP
HE MUST BE AROUND MY AGE...
DO-THUMP DO-THUMP
BUT HE'S STILL SO YOUNG...
HE'S GOOD!!
whisper whisper


WITH MY FINGER IN THIS STATE, I WON'T BE ABLE TO PLAY CORRECTLY.
TAKAKO... I WON'T MAKE IT!
NEXT/ NUMBER 15, PLEASE
YES, YES!
THAT GUY'S ALREADY DONE FOR.
HE'S TOO TENSE
Eh he he...

COME ON!
RUN
THEN WAIT FOR ME HERE. I'LL HAVE A WORD WITH HIM
OH!
Takuma Miki
3rd Inaugu
Date: August
NO, I WON'T ENTER.
Blah
The last national competition
Blah blah
Ah ha ha.
TOKUMA HAS REALLY MANAGED WELL
AN UNKNOWN AND GLITTERING WORLD
SO THIS IS THE WORLD HE WANTED TO FIND AGAIN..
I DON'T GET IT
WE STAND OUT AWK-WARDLY!!
YES

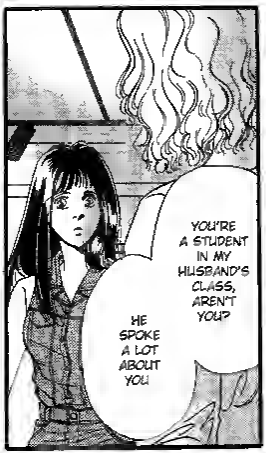
HE'S ALWAYS BEEN AMBITIOUS
AFTER ALL, DIDN'T HE MARRY IN ORDER TO MAKE A CAREER?
HIS WIFE IS VERY TENACIOUS
THERE'S NOTHING TO BRAG ABOUT...
...BUT IT ALLOWED HIM TO FIND STRONG SUPPORT. I'D LIKE TO DO THE SAME.
DO YOU REMEMBER THAT GUY IN OUR CLASS AT THE ART ACADEMY? THE ONE WHO WENT TO STUDY IN ITALY...
TODAY, HE HAS BECOME A TOURIST GUIDE TO EARN A LIVING.
THE POOR GUY...
IT'S A GLITTERING WORLD, BUT...
...COLD...
WHY DID I COME HERE?
"ONE DAY WE'LL GO TO AMERICA TOGETHER."
"YOU SURE ARE SELF-CONFIDENT... YOU FEAR NOTHING..."

"I WONDER IF I'M AS BRAVE AS YOU ARE "

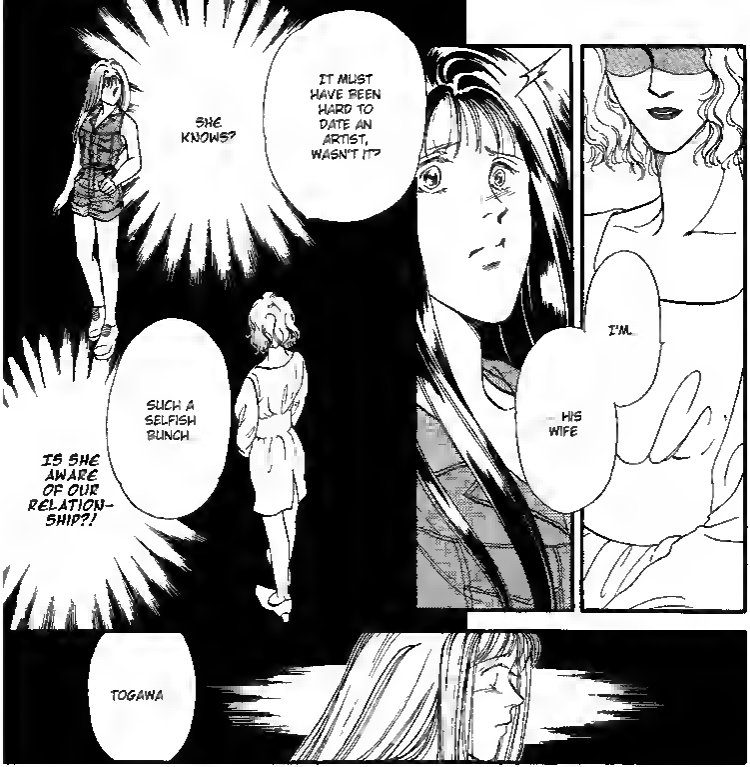
"YOU HAVE TO DO WHAT YOU FEEL LIKE DOING TEACHER! NO MATTER WHAT! EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO USE IMPROPER MEANS!"

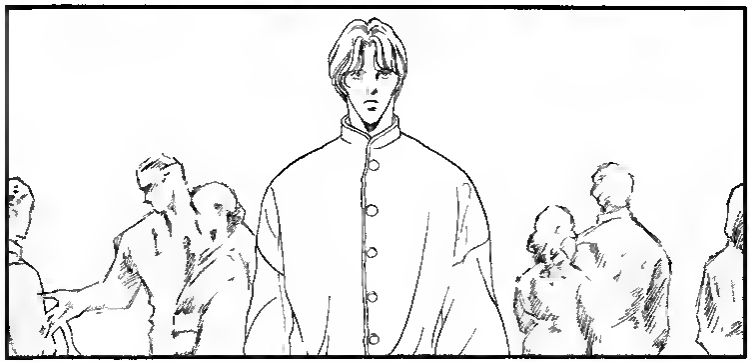
"THAT'S FUNNY "

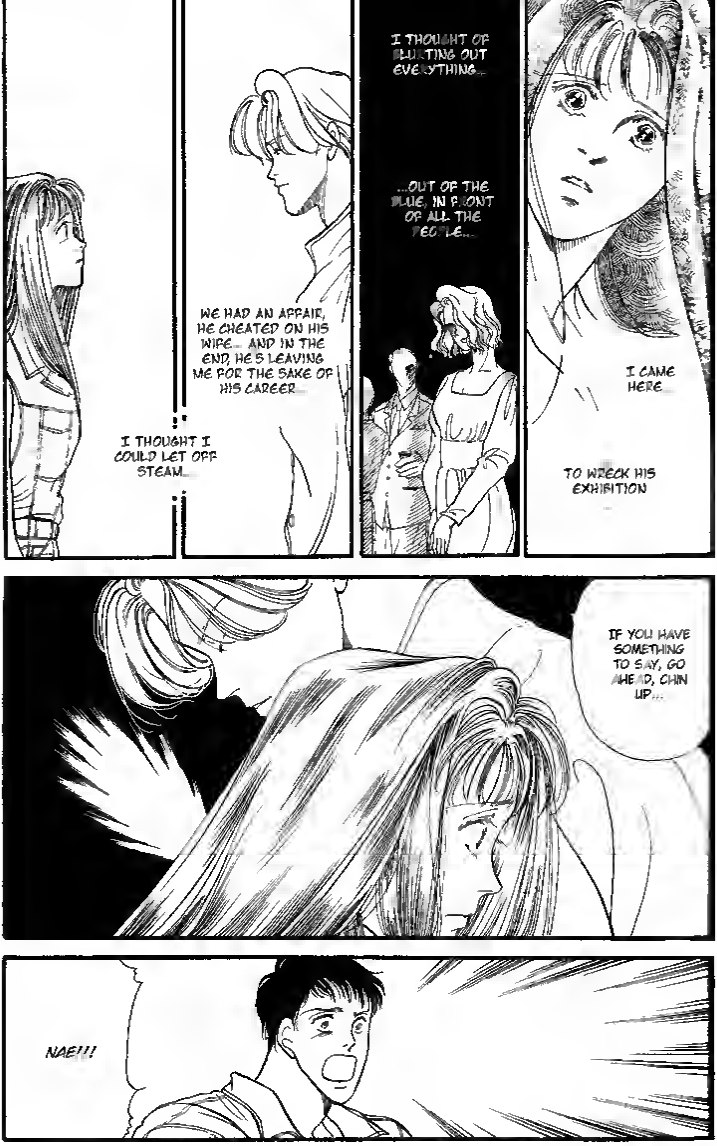
"DON'T YOU WANT TO FULFILL YOUR DREAM?"

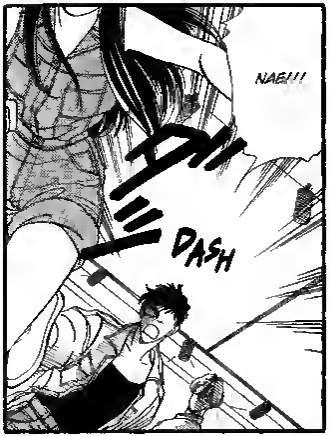


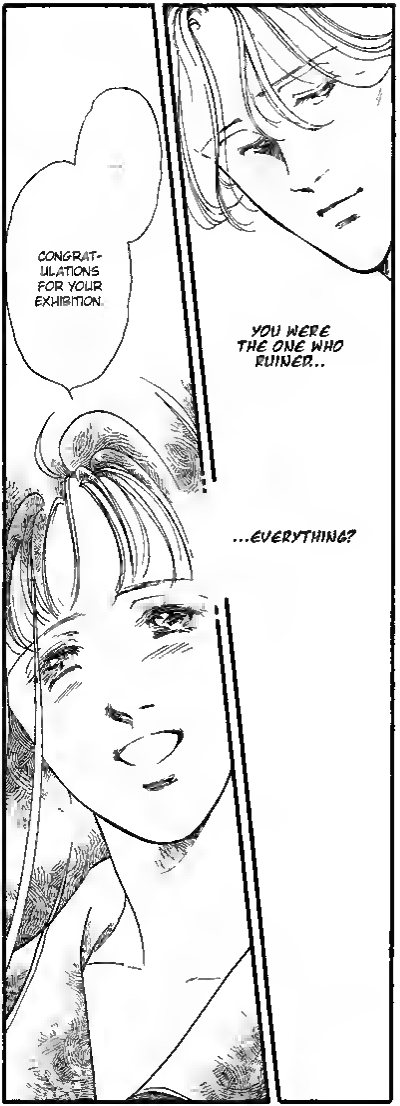
"ONCE I'LL HAVE DONE SO, IT WON'T BE A DREAM ANYMORE... "

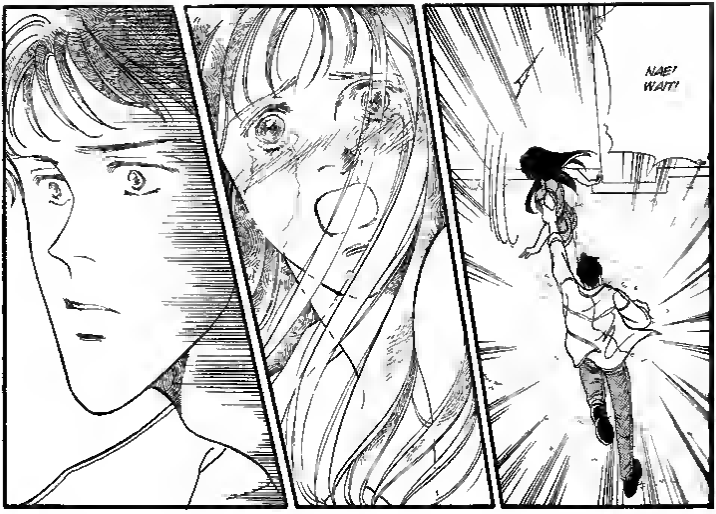

SHE KNOWS?
IT MUST HAVE BEEN HARD TO DATE AN ARTIST, WASN'T IT?
I'M...
HIS WIFE
SUCH A SELFISH BUNCH
IS SHE AWARE OF OUR RELATION-SHIP?!
TOGAWA




I THOUGHT I COULD LET OFF STEAM...
WE HAD AN AFFAIR, HE CHEATED ON HIS WIFE... AND IN THE END, HE'S LEAVING ME FOR THE SAKE OF HIS CAREER...
I THOUGHT OF BLURTING OUT EVERYTHING...
...OUT OF THE BLUE, IN FRONT OF ALL THE PEOPLE...
I CAME HERE...
TO WRECK HIS EXHIBITION
IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, GO AHEAD, CHIN UP...
NAE!!!


NAE!!!
DASH


CONGRAT-
ULATIONS
FOR YOUR
EXHIBITION.
YOU WERE
THE ONE WHO
RUINED...
...EVERYTHING?


NAE!
WAIT!

NAOYUKI! WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE?
I WAS LOOKING FOR YOU EVERY-WHERE
EH HE HE...
I CHICK-ENED OUT.
IT'S FOOLISH TO GIVE UP ON SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY WITHOUT EVEN TRYING!
I NEVER WOULD HAVE THOUGHT YOU WERE SUCH A COWARD!
Slaaap

DON'T SAY SUCH NON-SENSE!
FOO...
I DON'T HAVE YOUR TALENT
THAT'S THE BEST WAY FOR YOUR DREAM TO REMAIN ONLY A CHILDHOOD FANCY!
TAKAKO, PLEASE DON'T CONDEMN ME
I'M NOT LIKE YOU... YOU'RE TALENTED, YOU STUDIED IN AMERICA...
HOW AM I DIFFER-ENT?!
It seems like a bad joke...
♫
RUN
PUSH

My face in the mirror is like theirs..
It must be a bad joke.
They passed by a long time ago singing.
Everything will be all right tomorrow.
It's so ridiculous.. now I'm singing the same song.
HEY! THE CD HAS SEVERAL BUGS
IT'S AN OLD CD
IT'S ONE OF THE FEW THINGS I TOOK WITH ME
I believe yet that my dream will come true.
I THINK THAT CD MUST BE AT LEAST 20 YEARS OLD
OH, REALLY?!
EH HE HE!
HOW SILLY YOU ARE!
TELL ME WHAT'S WITH THIS BRUISE? IT'S NOT THE FIRST TIME
NOTHING AT ALL I JUST SLIPPED ON THE STAIRS AT HOME THE STAIRS ARE REALLY DANGEROUS

...
♫ Do you laugh at me...
♫ ...believing yet that my dream will come true?

AMERICA

By Keiko Ichiguchi

Volume 1 Chapter 2

Credits:
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